

# THE TUDORS

1540-1560



Elizabeth riding into London on her accession  
to the throne

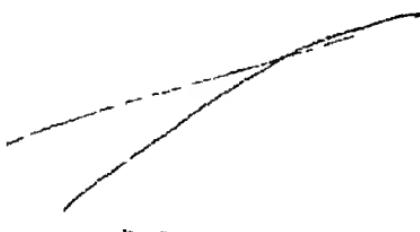
MAKERS OF HISTORY

# THE TUDORS

1540-1560

by

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## The People of this Book and the Times they Lived In (1540-1560)

THESE twenty years were full of plotting and scheming, treachery, persecution and hatred. Every man's hand was against his brother in the scramble for power and riches.

Tolerance was unknown. Both Catholics and Protestants were convinced that they were right and everyone else wrong, and whichever party was in power persecuted the other. They both suffered about equally, the Protestants under Mary, the Catholics under Edward VI and Elizabeth.

It was a shameful time, and most shameful because it was usually the honest and courageous men and women who were led to the scaffold and burnt at the stake. The cowards turned hypocrite and remained safe.

So far as those things are concerned which make a nation glorious, this twenty years can contribute little. People's minds were overshadowed by civil and religious strife. Richard Chancellor was almost the only explorer, and Surrey the only poet. The one was drowned on the high seas, and the other beheaded before he was thirty.

## THE TUDORS

Of course these troubles did not begin and end between 1540 and 1560. It is very wrong to suppose that the life of a nation can be divided up into definite periods and labelled; nor were people described here the only interesting people alive in England then. But they have been chosen because, in one way or another, they are all typical of their country and of their time.



## Edward VI (1537-1553)

### I. KING OF ENGLAND

HENRY VIII was so anxious for a son, and heir to his throne, that he decided to divorce his Queen, Catherine of Aragon, who had only given him a daughter, and marry again. This started the long and violent course of the Reformation in England, and yet, did not bring about the desired result. For Anne Boleyn had a daughter too. Henry's third Queen, Jane Seymour, had a son, and these three, Mary, Elizabeth, and Edward, were the only children of the King's six stormy marriages. Finally Henry, who had been willing to do any wrong so long as he left his throne secure, died in the bitter

knowledge that it must pass to a pale, sickly little boy not ten years old.

On 19th February, 1547, Edward VI rode to Westminster for his Coronation. (He had been staying in the Tower of London, the usual lodging for an uncrowned King.) The procession passed through the city streets "in most royal and goodly wise", cheered by the loyal citizens. On either side of the Prince's white pony rode his uncles, the ambitious brothers of his mother, Queen Jane Seymour. The elder was Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector. The younger was Baron Seymour of Sudeley and Lord High Admiral, but neither was yet as powerful as he wanted to be.

Along the road there were flags, pageants and loyal speeches. Edward looked and listened politely. Only once was he really interested. From the top of St. Paul's a rope ran down at a steep angle, firmly attached to an anchor in the ground. Down this slender stairway an acrobat came gliding head first, arms outstretched. He looked like a gaily coloured bird as he swooped out of the sky to land almost at the King's feet.

To the people of London the little King himself was the most interesting sight of all. They craned their necks and stood on tiptoe to see over one another's heads. Edward was a pale



*Edward VI riding to Westminster*

slight child stuffed out, as the fashion was, with padded doublet and hose, and pearl-embroidered cloth-of-gold. Perched on his fair hair he wore a black velvet cap with an ostrich feather clasped to the side by a jewelled brooch. His eyes, as serious as an old man's, looked straight ahead.

What was he thinking? No one knew. Throughout his short life no one ever knew. In that respect he was a true Tudor, son of his terrible father, and brother of his marvellous and no less terrible sister. He had a task in front of him that needed all his strength. Child as he was, he realized very well the power of the

crown he would wear, and he also realized that there was no one about him whom he could trust entirely. It was an age of unscrupulous and ambitious men. Even the most honest of them were not above using the boy-King for their own ends.

It is no wonder that Edward had neither time nor energy for being an ordinary little boy. It was not a time, in any case, when children were encouraged to be childish. They were expected to become little models of their elders at an early age. So it was natural that the boy-King should behave like a King rather than like a boy.

Someone wrote of him:

“He is the beautifullest creature that liveth under the sun, the wittiest, the most amiable, and the gentlest thing of all the world. Such a capacity for learning that it is a wonder to hear say. Finally he hath such a grace of feature and gesture, that it would seem he were already a father, and yet passeth not the age of ten years.”

This behaviour seemed to all Edward’s contemporaries very admirable, and not at all pitiful. He carried himself through the day-long ceremonies of his Coronation with the dignity of a grown man. There was only one childish

touch in his behaviour all day. Before the procession started for the Abbey he was sick from excitement—all down his embroidered waist-coat.

The people welcomed their new King whole-heartedly. They had loved his father in spite of all his faults, and they were prepared to love his son. Before the high altar of Westminster Abbey a platform had been erected. The Archbishop of Canterbury led the King to each of the four corners in turn, presenting him to the people:

“Sirs, here I present King Edward, rightful and undoubted inheritor by the laws of God and man to the royal dignity and crown imperial of this realm, whose consecration, inunction<sup>1</sup> and coronation is appointed by all the nobles and peers of this land to be this day. Will ye seive at this time and give your good wills and assents to the same consecration, inunction<sup>1</sup> and coronation as by your duty and allegiance ye are bound to do?”

Then the ancient Abbey rang to the shouts of the people who packed it to the doors:

“Yea! Yea! Yea! King Edward! King Edward! King Edward!”

The King, after many long ceremonies, was crowned with the crown of Edward the Con-

<sup>1</sup> Inunction anointing with holy oil

fessor, and anointed with holy oil, and all the peers knelt before him to swear their loyalty.

"I become your liege man of life and limb and of earthly worship and faith and truth. I shall bear with you to live and die against all manner of folks, as I am bound by my allegiance and by the laws and statutes of this realm, so help me God and Allhallows."

So King Edward was crowned, and when he had been crowned, he took off his kingly robes and went back to the schoolroom, and to the three people in the world whom he really loved and trusted. There was Master John Cheke, his wise, kindly tutor, and Mrs. Jackson, his nurse ("Mother Jack" he called her), who dosed him and tended him and washed his eyes when he strained them with too much reading. And there was Bainaby Fitzpatrick, his dear Barney, an Irish boy two or three years older than himself, who was his constant companion and friend, and who took the whippings that Edward sometimes deserved but could not be given.

## 2. A KING'S PRIVATE LIFE

The young King now began a curious double life. On the one hand there was his life as a schoolboy. Every morning he studied Latin, Greek, French and Divinity with Master Cheke,

carefully penning his exercises at a little desk which had been covered in black velvet so that ink-stains did not show. He worked hard, his thoughts never wandering from the task in hand. He loved learning for learning's sake, but he also realised the need to prepare himself for the work that lay ahead, for Edward did not intend to be a figure-head. As soon as he was old enough, he would take the reins of Government into his own capable Tudor hands—there was no doubt about that.

It was no wonder that the child rarely laughed, or that there was usually a faint frown of concentration on his forehead. Occasionally Barney was whipped, but it was more often for mistakes in a Latin prose than for any high-spirited piece of mischief.

There were games, of course, in the royal parks and gardens: archery, mock battles, prisoner's base and riding at the ring. This was a game requiring a good deal of skill. The ring was not very large and it had to be carried away on the point of a lance—touching did not count. Edward won more often at "Rovers". This was a game with bows and arrows. The boys shot in turn at a mark—a stump, perhaps, or a post or a white stone, and he who hit best was allowed to choose the next mark, and so on.

Such games were part of a normal boy's life, and Edward was not so much a King that he could not take part in them. He could be scolded by his tutor, mothered by his nurse and beaten at games by his companions as much as any other child.

But then there was the other side of his life, the royal side. There were the long hours he spent in Council, sitting silent at the head of the table while the arguments rolled from side to side, arguments which at first meant very little to his drowsy ears. Papers that he did not always understand were brought to him to sign. The nobles treated him with exaggerated respect, knelt before him, and kissed his hand, yet he still had to do what he was told. Much he would have liked to rebel, he was the Protector's puppet. Somerset even kept him short of pocket-money so that he could not tip the people who expected to be tipped. It was not a life to be envied.

However, in spite of his youth, Edward soon began to make his presence felt. Like all the Tudors he stopped at nothing to get what he wanted, and considered nobody who stood in his way. He was brilliantly and precociously clever. He began to read his papers and understand them. He refused to sign things of which



*Playing "Rovers" in Windsor park*

he did not approve. More than that, he sized up very accurately the people around him, and relied more and more upon himself alone. He seemed to have neither need nor desire for ordinary human affection, and the entries in his diary are both horrifying and pathetic.

When his uncle Somerset was accused of high treason the thirteen-year-old King signed his death warrant and then entered in his diary, without comment, the fact that "the Duke of Somerset had his head cut off on Tower Hill on 22nd January." This of a man who had been his constant companion and guardian for five years!

“What people are they,” asked one of his contemporaries, “who say ‘the King is but a child’? Have we not a noble King? Was there ever King so godly, so noble, brought up with such noble council, such excellent and well-learned schoolmasters? I will tell you this. I speak it as I think. His Majesty hath more godly wit and understanding, more learning and knowledge at this age, than twenty of his progenitors, that I could name, had at any time of their lives.”

But the bright flame burnt itself out all too quickly. The King had never been strong, and when he was fifteen he was attacked by consumption. While he was ill, and too weak to resist the coaxing of ambitious nobles, he was persuaded to change the succession from his sister Mary to his cousin Jane Grey.

Soon afterwards he died in Barney’s arms, on 6th July, 1553. His last words were: “Lord have mercy on me and take my spirit.” He was not quite sixteen years old.



## Thomas Seymour (1508-1549)

### I. THE SEYMOUR BROTHERS

THE Seymour brothers were of noble blood, and as ambitious as anyone else at the court of Henry VIII, but until 1536 it did not look as though they would ever be very important. Then, in that year, Henry VIII, already tiring of his second Queen, Anne Boleyn, noticed one of her ladies-in-waiting. This was a lovely girl called Jane Seymour. Anne was hustled out of the way on a charge of treason, and on the day after her execution in the Tower Henry married Jane, who, even before the death of her rival, had been living like a Queen and was honoured like one.

Jane Seymour was probably the best-loved of

Henry's six wives. She gave him the son he so passionately longed for, and she died before his fickle love had time to cool. So her brothers, the little prince's uncles, were in high favour at court, and they set themselves to make good use of their good fortune.

The elder brother, Edward, became Earl of Hertford, and afterwards Duke of Somerset. The younger, Thomas, was made Admiral of the Fleet.

"The Admiral was fierce in courage, courtly in fashion, in personage stately, in voice magnificent, but somewhat empty of matter. The Duke was mild, affable, free and open, more easily to be worked on, but in no way malicious, and honoured by the common people, as the Admiral was more generally esteemed among the nobles. The Protector was more to be desired as a friend, and the other more to be feared as an enemy. The defects of each being taken away, the virtues united would have made an excellent man."

When King Henry died, Edward Seymour became Lord Protector of the Kingdom and of the little Edward VI. He was a good man, in his own way, but not wise enough nor bold enough nor great enough to stand out above the other nobles. His enemies did not find it very difficult to manage his downfall, and he was

beheaded in 1552. He had been Protector for three years, during which time he had undoubtedly done his best, but unfortunately his best was not quite good enough.

Politics in those days was very much like a game of dice. It was exciting, and comparatively easy, to shoot up to great heights of wealth and power, but the higher one rose the more dangerous it became. Plenty of people were jealously waiting for the great man to make a mistake. The younger Seymour was more ambitious than his elder brother. He played his game more wildly, and crashed nearly three years sooner.

By profession Thomas Seymour was a fighting man. As a soldier of fortune he had fought all over Europe, not very particular whose side he was on, so long as there was adventure and glory to be won. He was tall, handsome, and brave, with a great roaring voice and a ringing laugh. It was difficult not to be fascinated by him, but those who observed him with a clear eye saw that he cared for neither God nor the devil, nor for anyone in the world but Thomas Seymour, and perhaps for his adoring mother who did his housekeeping for him. He was a man "of much wit but very little judgment."

After their sister's marriage to the King, both brothers became important people, and her death and the King's later marriages did nothing to lessen their importance. In 1540, at the wedding of Anne of Cleves (Henry's fourth wife), Thomas Seymour was one of the six knights chosen to challenge all comers in the tournament, and acquitted himself boldly and well. Not very long after this he wanted to marry Catherine Parr, but the arrangements were not complete when the King cast eyes on her as his sixth wife (since Anne of Cleves there had been the ill-fated young Catherine Howard, "the rose without a thorn"). Thomas Seymour was wise enough to withdraw his claim quietly and say no more. No wife was as important to him as the King's favour.

In 1547 King Henry died, leaving his little son in the charge of a Council of nobles. The elder Seymour, having removed his nearest rival, the Earl of Surrey, had himself elected Lord Protector and created Duke of Somerset. Following his example, the Council dealt out honours to themselves all round. Thomas Seymour was given the title of Baron Seymour of Sudeley, and his rank raised from Admiral of the Fleet to Lord High Admiral.

## 2. LORD HIGH ADMIRAL

Thomas Seymour was jealous. He was furious that his elder brother had acquired a dukedom while he had only been given a mere barony. And why was Edward Lord Protector while he only the Lord High Admiral?

One of Somerset's faults was that he could not, or would not, control his swashbuckling younger brother. Perhaps he did not believe that Thomas could really wish him harm. But Thomas wanted to be the most important man in the kingdom, and he set about accomplishing that end as fast as he could.

The King was hardly in his grave before Seymour went back to his old love and married Queen Catherine secretly. It was not, however, just a romantic ending to an old love-story, for he first tried for the hands of the Princess Mary and the Princess Elizabeth, either of whom would have been an even better match than the Queen Dowager.

However, it gave him a good deal of satisfaction that his brother's wife, although a Duchess, had to give place before his wife. The two ladies quarrelled about their rank. Once they both tried to get through the same door

at once, and stuck fast in their huge stiff skirts, to the great delight of the on-lookers.

Seymour had more practical plans than just marriage. He searched through all the old State papers he could find to prove that when one of a young King's uncles was Protector of the Realm, the other ought to be Governor of the King's Person. In this he was not successful, so he tried to gain a personal influence over the King. He sent him pocket money and friendly advice, and tried in all the subtle ways he could think of to turn the boy against one uncle and towards the other.

But it was useless trying to be more subtle than a Tudor, even a ten-year-old one. The pale, shrewd little boy made up his own mind about this flashy, noisy uncle. While Seymour was congratulating himself that he had won young Edward's affections, Edward saw through his uncle's plans. But this did not prevent him taking all the money his uncle offered him.

The Lord High Admiral grew bolder and bolder and behaved more and more outrageously. He kept a small army of retainers at his beck and call. He was forever poring over a map and measuring out how much of England was under his influence. He sent agents into the counties to stir up support for himself and dislike



*The Queen Dowager and the Duchess quarrelling*

for his brother. He bought little Lady Jane Grey's wardship from her father for £2,000 and planned to marry her to the King.

In fact, anyone could see that he was preparing a revolution, and so confidently that he hardly pretended to keep it a secret. The only person who deliberately shut his eyes to these dangerous actions was his over-indulgent brother the Duke of Somerset.

As Lord High Admiral, Seymour was supposed to keep the British seas clear of pirates. But the pirates seemed to flourish and nothing ever came of the Admiral's expeditions against them. He had found that it was more profitable to arrange with them for a share of their booty,

than to clear up their strongholds. Another profitable arrangement was with one Master Sharington, the keeper of the Bristol Mint. This gentleman made a good living by coining false money and clipping the edges of silver coins. (It was to prevent this very common sort of trickery that milled edges were introduced, but that was many years later.) Master Sharington made £10,000 worth of false coins for the Lord High Admiral.

It was rumoured that Seymour intended to kidnap the King. He was called before the Council to explain himself, but he refused to go, and Somerset, foolishly, overlooked the matter. "Hoping that mildness would turn the Admiral, he not only allowed him to retain office at the Admiralty, but gave him further lands."

At last the Protector's patience gave out and he saw that his younger brother's impudent breaking of the law was dangerous to the peace of the country. Seymour was arrested on the 17th January, 1549. His career as Lord High Admiral had lasted less than two years. The Council debated as to whether they should charge him with treason, and it was the young King who made up their minds for them. He was not likely to forgive the man who had

treated him like a baby and tried to buy his affection. It did not pay to treat Edward like a child. Coolly the eleven-year-old boy gave his approval to measures which meant his uncle's death.

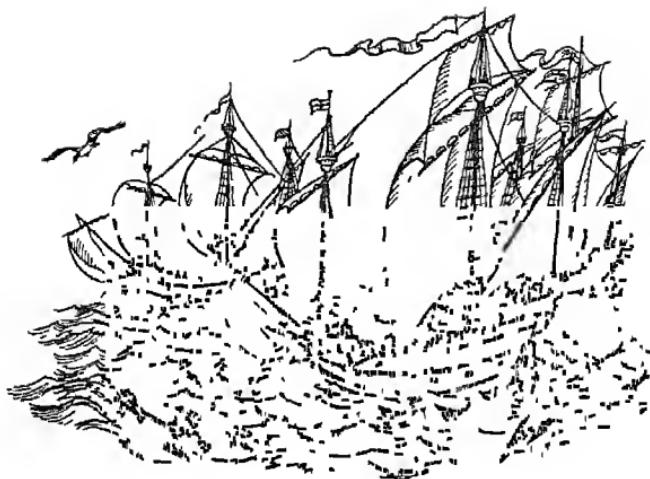
“We do perceive that there be great things which be objected and laid to my Lord Admiral mine uncle, and they tend to treason; we perceive that you require but justice to be done; we think it reasonable, and we will that you proceed according to your request.”

Seymour was imprisoned in the Tower. His last night on earth was spent in writing long letters to the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, urging them to conspire against Somerset. These letters he hid in the sole of a shoe. But his last whispered words to his servant as he was led out to die—“Remember the letters”—were overheard. The man was searched, the letters found, and he was hanged almost before his master was dead.

“As touching the kind of his death,” said Bishop Latimer in a sermon preached before the King, “I refer that to God. In the twinkling of an eye He may save a man, and turn his heart. What he did I cannot tell. And when a man hath two strokes with the axe, who can tell but between two strokes he doth repent? It is hard

THE TUDORS

to judge. But this I will say, if they ask me what I think of his death, that he died very dangerously, irksomely and horribly. He was a wicked man, and the realm is well rid of him."



## Richard Chancellor (d. 1556)

### I. THE PASSAGE TO CATHAY

IN the sixteenth century most of the world was still unknown, and many brave explorers were setting out on voyages of discovery. In the reign of Edward VI, explorers of later days, Drake, Raleigh, Hawkins, Grenville, and Frobisher were already growing up, and it was the stories of men like Richard Chancellor that fired their young imaginations.

After many centuries of fearing to venture to the far corners of the world, men had realized that discovery was the most exciting and profit-

able way of life. They had found that the earth was not a flat surface, hanging between Heaven and Hell, but a globe from which, puzzling as it might seem, one did not fall off even when one had journeyed beyond the horizon to the other side of the world.

It took another hundred years and Sir Isaac Newton's famous apple to explain this fact, but the Tudor navigators had discovered that it was so, and that was all they cared about. They had been afraid of the terrible danger of sailing right over the edge of the world into black infinity, and once that danger was removed (Magellan's ships had finally removed it by sailing right round the world in 1519) they were ready to face anything. So from all the ports of Europe expeditions were setting out to conquer new worlds. It was an exciting time in which to be born.

In 1553, in the seventh and last year of King Edward's reign, the company of Merchant Adventurers (whose Governor was that mighty old explorer Sebastian Cabot, a half-Portuguese sea-captain from Bristol) fitted out an expedition of three ships to find a quick north-eastern route to Cathay—round the north coast of Norway and over the crown of the world.

“Cathay” was a name for the far East in

general and for India in particular, and it was the aim of all expeditions whether they set out westwards or eastwards, Christopher Columbus had been on his way there in 1492 when he discovered America. Cathay was a wonderful land, not savage at all, but with a civilization older than the European one. Traders and travellers ever since the days of Marco Polo had been bringing back stories of its gold and jewels, its ivory, spices, silks, elephants, carved jade and exquisite paintings on silk, of its cities ten times larger and finer than London or Rome, of its fabulous princes and palaces.

The aim of all European nations was to trade in this marvellous market, and, first of all, to find a quick way that would cut down the hazards of the journey.

The Merchant Adventurers' three ships were called the *Bona Esperanza* ("The Good Hope"), the *Bona Confidentia* ("The Good Confidence") and the *Edward Bonaventure*. This last was named after the poor young king, who was already too ill to watch from his palace windows as the little fleet set sail from Greenwich, and who died long before it returned from its journey.

Sir Hugh Willoughby was Captain-General of the Expedition, while Richard Chancellor

was the Pilot-Major and Captain of the *Edward Bonaventure*. He was a good seaman, a sound, trustworthy man, and had been chosen for the job out of a score of eager applicants because he had already sailed on two voyages of discovery. He was recommended by one Master Henry Sidney, who is best known to history as the father of that perfect hero and mirror of all the Elizabethan virtues, young Sir Philip.

Sebastian Cabot himself drew up a set of rules under thirty-three headings for the guidance of the explorers—a list which covered everything from instructions for coping with cannibals, to sky-blue uniforms for the sailors, “not to be worn but by the order of the captain, when he shall see cause to muster or show them in good array.”

Item No. 6, for instance, directed that.

“... The fleet shall keep together and not separate themselves asunder, as much as by wind and weather may be done and permitted, and that the Captains, Pilots and Masters shall speedily come aboard the Admiral, when and as often as he shall seem to have just cause to assemble them concerning the affairs of the fleet and voyage.”

(The “Admiral” was the chief ship as well as the chief officer of a fleet.)

The three little ships, none of them bigger than a North Sea trawler, or one of the smaller Cross-channel steam-boats of to-day, set sail from the port of London on 10th May, 1553. The winds being against them, they made only slow progress until they were out of the estuary, and then sailed northwards for the coast of Norway. They carried with them letters from the King in a number of different languages, addressed to the King or ruler of any strange land they might chance upon. The letters began with a fine important flourish:

“Edward the Sixth, by the Grace of God King of England, France, and Ireland, etc., to all Kings, Princes, Rulers, Judges and Governors of the earth, and all other having any excellent dignity on the same, in all places under the universal heaven: peace, tranquillity and honour be unto you, and your lands and regions, which are under your dominions, and to every of you, as is convenient.”

Trouble overtook the fleet almost at once. The ships were separated from one another in a storm off the Lofoten Islands, and the *Bona Esperanza*, striving to rejoin her companions, was caught in the ice. Her crew were never seen alive again. They were all frozen to death

in the bitter Arctic winter and their bodies rescued two years later. Meanwhile Richard Chancellor, not knowing of his captain's fate, decided to continue the voyage with the remaining two ships.

## 2. THE LAND OF MOSCOVY

Chancellor did not reach Cathay, which was much further off than the geographers thought, but he did reach what is now the port of Archangel in northern Russia. This was the first English expedition to reach Russia, or Muscovy, although the Dutch merchants had already set up trading posts there. The magnificent furs from the Russian forests fetched high prices in Western European markets—"as sables, martens, grey beavers, foxes white, black and red, minks, ermines, minivers and harts."

At Archangel, Chancellor tried to obtain trading concessions, but the Russians had to obtain permission from their Duke in Moscow. When the messengers returned, they brought an invitation from the Duke for Chancellor to visit him, and he accepted. He left the two ships to winter in the northern port, where the crews were treated with kindness by the Russians, and travelled the seven hundred miles to Moscow by sledge.



*The Russian nobles welcome Chancellor to Moscow*

We do not really know much about Chancellor. This is the story of an expedition rather than of a man. But we do know from the story of his voyage that he must have been a very brave, energetic man, undaunted by set-backs or dangers. He had also another quality essential for an explorer. Nothing was too small for him to notice or too insignificant to write down. He knew that any information would be useful to Sebastian Cabot and the Merchant Adventurers, and he made a most minute and careful inventory of everything he saw and heard.

The Duke of Muscovy was the Czar of all

Russia and a very grand prince indeed. He welcomed the Englishmen kindly and entertained them for the whole winter. For his part, Chancellor was careful to keep one of the rules that Cabot, having experience of his countrymen abroad, had seen fit to make:

“26. Item: every nation and region is to be considered advisedly, and not to provoke them by any disdain, laughing, contempt, or such like, but to use them with prudent circumspection, with all gentleness and courtesy. . . .”

Chancellor was not one of those Englishmen who treat all foreigners with slightly amused contempt. He was genuinely interested in new countries and new people, and was a welcome visitor in Moscow, from which he sailed home the next year with polite letters for the King and permissions for trading posts.

Among other things, Chancellor wrote in his report with special admiration of the astonishingly tough cavalry that the Russians called “Cossacks”:

“I believe they be such men for hard living as are not under the sun; for no cold will hurt them. Yea, and though they lie in the field two months, at such time as it shall freeze more than a yard thick, the common soldier

hath neither tent nor anything else over his head, the most defence they have against the weather is a felt, which is set against the wind and the weather, and when snow comes he does cast it off, and makes him a fire, and lies him down thereby. . Every man must carry and make provision for himself and his horse for a month or two, which is very wonderful. For he himself shall live upon water and oatmeal mingled together cold, and drink water thereto, and his horse shall eat green wood, and such-like baggage, and shall stand open in the cold field without cover, and yet will he labour and serve him right well."

Another thing that struck him very much was the Russian peasant's submission to his overlord, and the difference between the people of Russia and England in this respect:

"He will say that he hath nothing, but it is God's and the Duke's Grace's, and cannot say, as we the common people in England say, if we have any thing—that it is God's and our own."

Chancellor came home with his two ships in 1555, two years after he had set out. The next year he went again to Muscovy in the *Edward Bonaventure*, but on the way back the gallant little ship was caught in a storm and lost with

all hands. The captain was still a young man when he died. What was said of Richard Chancellor before his first voyage could be said of all explorers, ancient or modern:

“You are to remember into how many perils, for your sakes and his country’s love, he is now to run. . . . We commit a little money to the chance and hazard of fortune: he commits his life (a thing to a man of all things most dear) to the raging sea, and the uncertainties of many dangers. . . . We shall keep our own coasts and country; he shall seek strange and unknown kingdoms. He shall commit his safety to barbarous and cruel people, and shall hazard his life amongst the monstrous and terrible beasts of the sea.”



## Lady Jane Grey (1537-1554)

### I. MASTER AYLMER'S PUPIL

IT was dangerous to be of the blood royal in those days even if you were only a little girl doing your lessons and embroidering your samplers. Lady Jane Grey had the misfortune to be directly descended from Henry VII—her grandmother was Henry VIII's sister Mary—and she had for father one of the most ambitious men in an age of ambitious men. Noble families, either through their own ambition or the jealousy of others, often ended their lives on the block. By 1558 when Elizabeth came to the throne, there was only one duke left in England, and he was beheaded soon after. But life was

never more dangerous than it was when little Lady Jane was born.

Her father was Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk. He had no hope of being king (it was his wife who had the royal blood) but he had a dream of making his gentle little daughter Queen of England. First he tried to arrange a marriage between Jane and her cousin Edward VI. Thomas Seymour, Lord Admiral, for a payment of £2,000, agreed to help him. But this plan was thwarted by Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector, who had his own plans. He meant to marry his own daughter to the young King, and marry Jane to his son.

Jane did not have a happy childhood. She was the puppet of stern, ambitious parents who thought always of training her to be a Queen. They did not behave as if they loved her at all.

Master Roger Ascham, the Princess Elizabeth's tutor and a very wise and clever man, once visited the home of the Greys at Bradgate, near Leicester. He found that the Duke and Duchess and all their people had gone out to hunt in the park. Almost the only person left in the great house was a thirteen-year-old girl who was sitting in her room, reading a Greek text "with as much delight," said Master Ascham, "as some gentlemen would read a merry tale."



*Master Roger Ascham finds Lady Jane Grey  
alone in the house reading*

He asked her how it was that she was not out of doors with everyone else. She made a very strange answer for a child:

“All their sport,” she said, “in the park is but a shadow to the pleasure that I find in Plato. Alas, good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant.”

Ascham, not a little intrigued by this reply, asked her further.

“And how came you, madam, to this deep knowledge of pleasure, and what did chiefly allure you to it, seeing not many women, and but very few men, have attained thereto?”

“I will tell you,” answered Jane, “and tell you a truth, which perchance you may marvel at. One of the greatest benefits God ever gave me is that he sent me so sharp and severe parents and so gentle a schoolmaster. For when I am in presence of either father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand, or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing, or doing anything else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure and number, even so perfectly as God made the world, or else am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea presently sometimes with pinches, nips and bobs, and other ways, which I will not name for the honour I bear them, so without measure dis-

### LADY JANE GREY

ordered that I think myself in hell, till time come that I must go to Master Aylmer, who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing while I am with him. And when I am called away from him I fall on weeping, because, whatever I do else but learning is full of grief, trouble, fear and whole misliking unto me. And thus my book hath been so much my pleasure, and bringeth daily to me more pleasure and more, that in respect of it all other pleasures in very deed be but trifles and troubles to me."

But however she was treated by her parents, Jane was praised everywhere as a scholar, as wise and learned beyond her years, in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian and French. Grave and learned men were not ashamed to write to her and were astonished by the letters they received in return.

### 2. THE NINE-DAYS' QUEEN

When Jane was sixteen the schemes to make her Queen were still afoot. There was much whispering in corners and many secret meetings in castles and palaces.

It was no longer possible to marry her to Edward VI, who was plainly dying of con-

sumption, but the ambitious Suffolk would not give up his dearest dream. He would make her Queen in her own right!

Protector Somerset (Edward Seymour) had been executed, and the Duke of Northumberland was Protector in his place. He and Suffolk laid their crafty heads together. Northumberland was to persuade the young King to make a new will, leaving his crown to his cousin Jane. Then Jane would be Queen, and if she were married to Northumberland's young son, Guilford Dudley, he would be King. Both the proud fathers would have riches and power unlimited.

So it was arranged and so it was carried out, although poor little Jane had to be pushed to the marriage with "nips and bobs" and even blows. Then Edward died and Queen Jane was proclaimed in London—"but few or none said God save her."

Princess Mary prepared to fight for the title that she knew was hers by right, whatever King Edward had been persuaded to sign on his deathbed. No one was more horrified at the news of the proclamation than the sixteen-year-old Queen herself. "I was so stunned and stupefied that, overcome by sudden and unexpected sorrow, I fell to the ground, weeping very

bitterly . . . and, at the same time turned to God, humbly praying and beseeching Him that, if what was given me was in truth and legitimately mine, he would grant me grace and power to govern to His glory and service, and for the good of His realm."

The next day the little Queen was brought to the Tower, the usual royal lodging-place before a coronation, but the crowds through which she passed gave her no welcome, in spite of her youth and beauty.

Meanwhile Mary had raised her standard, and an army of supporters flocked round her. Catholic she might be, but they admired her Tudor courage and quickness in a crisis, and they wanted none of the Protestant puppet-queen. Jane's nine-days' reign was soon over. Loyal voices proclaimed Mary Queen in every town of the kingdom, and Northumberland saw that it was no good to keep up the pretence. Hastily changing sides, he himself proclaimed Queen Mary at the gates of the Tower. Inside the gloomy old fortress Jane sat in sad and splendid state. Her father came to tell her that she was no longer Queen. Jane was relieved beyond words at the glad news.

"Can I go home now?" she said.

But of course she could not go home. She and

her husband—the one sixteen years old, the other eighteen—were tried and found guilty of high treason.

Everyone knew that the poor children were guiltless and no one wished them harm. The real author of the conspiracy, Northumberland, had already been executed. Queen Mary was not a harsh woman and she intended to forgive the two young people as soon as it was safe to let them go free, but they had to remain imprisoned in the Tower for a while.

It was Jane's father who was the cause of more trouble. Pardoned for one offence, within a month or two he had joined another conspiracy against Queen Mary. It was foredoomed to failure and the leaders were arrested. But it was obvious that as long as Jane was alive there would be plots on her behalf. She and Dudley must both go.

Guilford was executed at 10 o'clock in the morning on Tower Hill, on February 12th, 1554. A little later the same day Lady Jane Grey was led out of her prison to a scaffold within the Tower walls. She held herself very bravely, "her countenance nothing abashed, neither her eyes moisted with tears," reading from her prayer-book as she went. Her maids were overcome with weeping. She herself very

LADY JANE GREY

composedly undid her dress, let down her hair and tied the handkerchief about her eyes. Only she could not at first find the block and felt for it blindly, saying: "What must I do? Where is it?" They guided her to it, and she lay down, saying, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." So died Lady Jane Grey, at the age of sixteen, who had "the birth of a princess, the learning of a clerk, the life of a saint, and the death of a malefactor."



## The Earl of Surrey (1517-1547)

### I. SURREY THE POET

HENRY HOWARD, Earl of Surrey, was the eldest son of the Duke of Norfolk, which meant that he was one of the greatest nobles in the kingdom. He was also partly of the royal blood and therefore very near the line of succession to the throne.

He was brought up in the King's household at Windsor, and Henry VIII was very fond of the slim handsome boy with dark dreamy eyes. Young Surrey was not always dreaming however. He excelled at all the sports of chivalry—tilting and jousting, sword-play and archery. He was a brave boy and grew into a gallant young man. He was to the age of Henry VIII

what the young Sir Philip Sidney was to the age of Elizabeth.

Like every brave knight since the days of King Arthur he loved a lady. When he was quite young he was married to Lady Frances Vere and they were very happy together and had four children. But that was an ordinary, everyday sort of love compared to the chivalrous passion that a knight ought to feel for the lady of his choice. When young Surrey was visiting the Princess Mary's court one day, he caught sight of a lovely girl among the ladies-in-waiting. He asked her name. It was Elizabeth Fitzgerald. That was too ordinary a name for Surrey. Privately he christened her "Geraldine" and took her for his guiding star. She was only thirteen. Probably they never knew one another very well. Perhaps they never even spoke to each other, and when she grew up she married someone else. But Surrey was a poet, and he poured out passionate verses to his lovely "Geraldine".

Since Chaucer died, nearly a hundred and fifty years before, there had been little English poetry, and what there was sounded harsh and dull. English people seemed to have lost the art. Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt were the first to introduce into England the gay rhythms

of the Italian style of poetry, full of passionate love expressed in flowery phrases, and rhymed in elegant and complicated ways. The favourite pattern for love verses was called a "sonnet". This sort of poem had to be fourteen lines long, no less and no more, and the lines had to rhyme in a certain way. Sonnets soon became wildly popular and everyone was reading and writing them. Sonneteering became a craze, like crossword puzzles, and it lasted until the end of Elizabeth's reign.

The verses of Wyatt and Surrey sound rather stiff and unwieldy to us, but we must remember that English poetry owes them a great debt, for they were the forerunners of Shakespeare and Spenser and all the glorious Elizabethan poets.

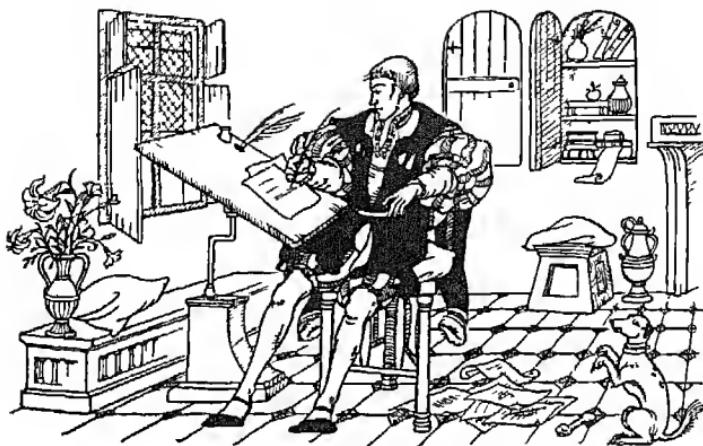
*Description of Spring* is one of Surrey's sonnets:

"The sweet season, that bud and bloom forth  
brings,

With green hath clad the hill, and eke the  
vale.

The nightingale with feathers new she sings;  
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.

Summer is come, for every spray now springs,  
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;  
The buck in brake his winter coat he slings;  
The fishes fleet with new repaired scale;



*Surrey writing a sonnet to "Geraldine"*

The adder all her slough away she slings;  
 The swift swallow pursueth the flies small;  
 The busy bee her honey now she mings;  
 Winter is woen that was the flowers' bale.

And thus I see, among these pleasant things,

Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs!"

This is interesting, because although Surrey was writing in the new Italian fashion, he could not quite escape from the old English way of writing poetry, which was, not to have rhymes at the ends of the lines, but to have words beginning with the same letter. If you look at the poem carefully, you will find at least two words

in each line beginning with the same letter. This is called alliteration and still survives in our language. We find it easy and satisfying to join words which begin with the same letter like "fact and fiction", "vim and vigour", although this kind of poetry has not been written for hundreds of years.

Surrey's poems were not published until ten years after his death, although many people had read them in manuscript. In 1557 a printer called Tottel produced a *Miscellany*, a anthology, of *Songs and Sonnets*. Most of them were by Surrey, some by Wyatt, and a few by other people. Everyone wanted a copy, and the presses were soon working overtime on edition after edition. Tottel's *Miscellany* marked the beginning of the great age of English poetry, and all the young poets of the next generation, Shakespeare and Spenser, Sidney, Raleigh and Marlowe, read and learnt from it.

## 2. "THE MOST FOOLISH PROUD BOY"

If young Surrey had been content to be a poet, his life would have been longer. But he could not forget that he was heir to the Duke-dom of Norfolk and the ancient house of Howard and he was marked, even among his proud

contemporaries, as “the most foolish, proud boy that is in England.”

He was not only proud, but hot-headed, rash, and fearless, with a furious and ungovernable temper. When he was nineteen, he had a short spell in prison on suspicion of dealing with the King’s enemies. A few years later he was in prison again for quarrelling, and then again for a boisterous night out with young Thomas Wyatt, when they went window-breaking with stone-bows. Surrey might have got off more lightly than he did, if he had not impudently explained that the citizens of London were a godless lot and he was merely preparing them for the Day of Judgement, when the Lord would awaken them much more thoroughly than he had done.

The next year he was better employing his high spirits by fighting the King’s enemies overseas, earning high praise from the Emperor for his courage and skill, but making enemies at home by his outspoken despatches in which he criticized the conduct of the war. His chief enemies were Edward and Thomas Seymour, who hoped, at the death of the King who was old and sick, to have custody of young Edward and all the power in the kingdom.

When Surrey came home he said, loudly and

without caring whether he were overheard, that his father, not Seymour, should be Lord Protector after the King's death. He said it so often and so loudly that the Seymours feared and hated him more than ever. They determined to get him out of the way.

Stories were whispered that Surrey in order to claim the throne himself, intended to marry Princess Mary, although he was married already. The Seymour's pointed out that he had the insolence actually to quarter the Royal arms of Edward the Confessor with his own. This, as a matter of fact, he had every right to do, being descended from that king, but his enemies raised a cry of "Treason!" and had him arrested, and his father too.

The King was already dying, and the Seymours wanted their rivals out of the way before he died, so that their plans would go without a hitch. Surrey and the Duke of Norfolk were tried and convicted of high treason. It seems a ridiculously small charge to us, but men were executed on still smaller charges in those days, at the whim of a king or the word of a king's favourite.

Surrey faced his judges as boldly as ever:

"Of what have you found me guilty?" he asked them. "You will find no law which justi-

fies you; but I know that the King wants to get rid of the noble blood around him, and to employ none but low people."

He feared neither man nor king nor death, and went to the scaffold on Tower Hill, between sorrowful crowds of people, as bravely and proudly as he had lived. He was twenty-nine. His father, who was to follow him a week later, was saved by an extraordinary chance. The King died the night before the execution, and so the death warrant was no longer valid. One cannot help wishing that it had been his gallant son who was reprieved.



## Mary Tudor (1516-1558)

### I. THE UNHAPPY PRINCESS

“ONE day the King showed me the Princess, in her nurse’s arms. I drew near, knelt and kissed her hand, for that alone is kissed by any duke or noble of the land, let his degree be what it may, nor does anyone see her without doffing his bonnet and making obeisance to her. The King said to me: ‘By God, Ambassador, this little girl never cries!’ And I replied: ‘Sacred Majesty, the reason is that her destiny does not move her to tears.’ ”

But the polite Ambassador was wrong about that and her destiny moved her to very many tears. The little Princess Mary became one of the saddest figures in all the history books, because

she tried so hard to do what she thought was right and to be a good Queen, and yet she died hated by all her people.

Mary was born in 1516. So long as Queen Catherine, her mother, and King Henry, her father, were happy together, she was happy too. She was a little afraid of her father and his sudden rages, but she adored her gentle Spanish mother.

When the affair of the divorce began, and the King's love turned to hatred, his young daughters also suffered. The Queen was no longer Queen, but "Princess Dowager". Mary was declared illegitimate and her titles taken away from her. She was forced to be Lady-in-Waiting to the red-haired baby whose mother was the new Queen.

Mary was not allowed to see her mother. Her father would have nothing to do with her. Anne Boleyn treated her as spitefully as she could. But Mary, though only eighteen, fought for her rights with the obstinacy that was a mark of all her family. She would not, in spite of all threats, renounce the name of Princess or curtsey to her baby half-sister—not so much for her own pride as for the sake of her mother. She would not acknowledge that Anne Boleyn was Queen, for that meant denying her mother's

claim. Her only crumb of comfort was in the cry with which loyal people greeted her in the streets: "Princess for all that!"

Mary was not very beautiful. She was short, with a square face, a gruff voice, and a passion for gay and rather unsuitable clothes. But she was kind and gentle and really good, qualities not often found among the people of King Henry's court. When Anne Boleyn was beheaded and the little Princess Elizabeth treated unkindly in her turn, Mary bore her no grudge, but had the little girl to live with her.

It was a time when few women remained unmarried unless they went into convents, but which of the princes of Europe would want to marry such a princess, unacknowledged and usually under a cloud of disapproval? So Mary did not marry, but lived quietly in the country, standing godmother to all her friend's children, trying on new clothes, collecting clocks and other pretty toys, and giving presents to everyone. She liked to ride about the countryside, visiting poor people, and in the evening she and her ladies played cards until it was time to go to bed. The country people loved her and brought her little gifts of eggs or wild strawberries, and gentlemen sent their daughters to be her maids:



*A labourer and his wife bringing gifts of eggs and strawberries to Princess Mary*

“In those days the house of this Princess was the only harbour for honourable young gentle-women, given any way to piety and devotion. It was the true school of virtuous demeanour, befitting the education that ought to be in noble damsels. And the greatest lords in the land were suitors to her to receive their daughters into her service.”

Sometimes Mary was in favour with her father; more often she was not, for she was a steadfast Catholic, and she refused to be bullied into attending the reformed services or sending away her priests.

Nor was her life happier after her father's death. Her little half-brother Edward was as fervent a Protestant as she was a Catholic. He was nine, she was thirty. Nevertheless, he was the King and could not be put over her knee and spanked, although from the pious priggish letters that he sent her about religion, he seems to have deserved something of the kind.

Edward seemed incapable of giving affection. He apparently did not feel anything at all for Mary although she had been very kind to him. She loved all children, but it was sometimes difficult to love Edward. In his name she was bullied and persecuted over the matter of her religion. During her father's time one of her

chaplains had been burnt as a heretic. No wonder that she grew intolerant as she grew older, and clung to her faith with more and more fervour. For, like all her family, she might be led but it was impossible to drive her.

It must have been with a certain feeling of relief that she heard of Edward's illness in the spring of 1553. At last, at the age of thirty-seven, her troubles would cease and she would be Queen. But no sooner was Edward dead than Lady Jane Grey was proclaimed Queen. It seemed as if the longed-for peace would never come.

## 2. "QUEEN MARY"

Once the trouble about Lady Jane Grey was over the people welcomed Mary to the throne almost unanimously. Although she was a Catholic they liked her. They had been sympathetic to her through all her difficulties, and she had gained their respect by the bold way in which she had acted when Jane was proclaimed Queen. With the speed and courage of a man she had ridden post-haste into the eastern counties and there rallied an army round her. They saw in her something of her father, and loved her for it.

An Italian visitor described her soon after her Coronation.

"Her Majesty's countenance indicates great benignity and clemency, which are not belied by her conduct, for although she has many enemies, and though so many of them were by law condemned to death, yet, had the executions depended solely on her Majesty's will, not one of them, perhaps, would have been condemned to death. . . . She is also very generous."

The sadness of Mary's life is that, although by nature such a good and kindly person, she stands condemned to history as "Bloody Mary". In five short years she managed to undo all the good she had ever done, to lose all the good-will of her people, and she died hated.

She had many of the Tudor gifts, courage, determination, doggedness, but she had not the supreme gift which both her father and Elizabeth possessed, of winning the people to her side. She won popularity and lost it again without knowing how or why. She imposed her will on her subjects. So did the other Tudors, but they always persuaded their subjects into agreement, and when they could persuade no longer, they gave in gracefully.

Mary committed the unforgiveable sin, in the eyes of Englishmen, of marrying a Spaniard. Mistrusting her own ability to rule by herself, and longing for a Catholic son to carry on the

family, she married one of the few Catholic Princes who were available at the time, Philip II of Spain.

The English loathed the Spaniards and hated the French whole-heartedly. Any other foreigner, even a Catholic, they might have endured, but a Spaniard was more than they could bear. They accepted him, of course, partly because they had to and partly because he hardly ever came to England, but they did not forgive Mary.

Secondly, there was the question of religion. Mary's religious fervour blinded her and made her as obstinate as iron. Tolerance was a word that had not been invented, and both Catholics and Protestants were convinced that they were right and the others absolutely wrong. So Mary was not a tyrant, but only a child of her time, when she decided to force her will on those of her subjects who were not of her own way of thinking. Of course, many people were still genuinely Catholic, and a good many others conformed peacefully in order to escape trouble, but Mary was determined that the Protestant leaders should not hinder the re-conversion of England to the Catholic Church. So the laws against heresy were re-enacted, and nearly three hundred people met their death in the five years of

her reign. This may seem a large number of people, but it was not a twentieth of the number of Catholics who were put to death under Elizabeth. The difference lay, not in the justice or injustice of the affair, but in the people's feelings. Under Mary they felt that they were having an alien way of life, a Spanish rule, a foreign religion, thrust upon them, and with all their obstinate English pride they hated the Queen who was responsible.

In October 1558 Mary died, only forty-two years old, but worn out with sorrow and trouble. She had been ill for some time, and the son she had hoped and prayed for never came.

She was a pitiful figure as she lay dying; knowing that all she had tried to do in the name of God and her religion had been in vain. The throne would go to a Protestant after all, and nothing would be left of her short reign but a bitter memory in the hearts of her people.



## Archbishop Cranmer (1489-1556)

### I. THE PRAYER-BOOK

By nature Thomas Cranmer should never have been an archbishop at all. Still less should he have been at the centre of such a web of trouble as the Reformation in England. But whatever his faults there were two magnificent things in his life. The first was the Prayer-Book. The second was his martyrdom.

Thomas Cranmer began his career as a priest and a scholar. He was a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. He was the younger son of a not-very-prosperous country gentleman, and fame and fortune did not easily come to younger sons.

He might have continued in his quiet scholarly backwater until the day of his death, but the religious storms which swept the country brought him from the peace of Cambridge to die at the stake.

Everyone was talking about the King's divorce, and Cranmer was brought to Henry's notice as a man who approved of the divorce and saw how it could be accomplished. The King was anxious to have churchmen on his side, and Cranmer was just such a man as he wanted, honest and learned enough, yet easily converted to the King's ideas. Cranmer became one of the King's servants and Henry made him Archbishop of Canterbury in 1532, an honour he did not in the least expect.

Whatever Henry's faults, he had the power of compelling loyalty and affection from those around him. Cranmer loved him, and, oddly enough, the King was very fond of Cranmer. He was the only one of those whom Henry raised to high places who did not have a disastrous fall.

Cardinal Wolsey died just before being condemned to death. Sir Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell, Anne Boleyn, Catherine Howard, and many other people were executed. But Thomas Cranmer survived, and he was still

Archbishop of Canterbury when Edward VI came to the throne.

It was not that Cranmer lacked enemies. There were three occasions when they tried to conspire against him and bring about his downfall. But Henry remained his friend.

“I would you should well understand,” said the King to the Council on the third of these occasions, “that I account my Lord of Canterbury as faithful a man towards me as ever was prelate in this realm, and one to whom I am many ways beholden.”

After that no one tried to discredit Cranmer so long as Henry lived.

Some people have called Cranmer a mere yes-man, a jackal following after the King to pick up any scraps he could. Others have said that he was an honest man whose views most fortunately happened to coincide exactly with the King’s. Probably, he was neither black nor white but a most unheroic grey, doing things sometimes because he believed in them and sometimes because the King, his master, told him to.

Between them they began to build the Reformed Church of England, which was completed in the next reign. Edward VI, although so young, and his Protectors, Somerset and

Northumberland, were ardent Protestants. So was Cranmer. He was a more sincere Protestant than King Henry had been.

As the doctrines of the new Church became clearer, it was necessary to write a new Prayer-Book. The old Missal was no longer wanted. Apart from the fact that it contained doctrines which the Protestants did not believe, it was written in Latin, and the reformers wanted an English book for an English Church. Although Latin was still widely used as the language of learning, and law, in church it reminded people too much of the Pope and Catholicism.

It was Cranmer's task to compile the new Prayer-Book and surprisingly, he produced a work of great beauty. He may not have written it all himself, but he was responsible for it. It had an enormous influence on the English language, apart from its religious worth. People who heard the beautiful sentences, Sunday after Sunday, absorbed them without knowing it, and Cranmer did something towards moulding the language that Shakespeare and all the other Elizabethans used with such glorious effect.

## 2. THE MARTYR

When Queen Mary Tudor came to the throne in 1553, she was determined to restore the

Catholic Church in England, and Cranmer's days of peace were over. He was not a very strong man, but he was not such a hypocrite as to change his religion to please the Queen, although there were plenty who did.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishops Latimer and Ridley, were the keystones of the Reformed Church. Most of the other Bishops, and countless less important people, were prepared to desert the new church for the old. For some of them it was not their first change. They had readily changed the old church for the new under Henry VIII.

These three had no intention of changing, and obviously they could not remain in their Bishoprics. But the Queen was quite willing that they should go quietly overseas. They were warned in advance that their arrest had been ordered, and given every chance to escape to the Protestant states of Germany or the Netherlands. However, they preferred to stay and stand their trial.

The trial was held at Oxford because the best Catholic scholars belonged to that University. A dispute was held in the hall called the "Divinity School", and all the wisest men of the University tried to convince the three Bishops of their errors, but without success. They were

then condemned as heretics, but remained in prison for more than a year before the sentence was carried out.

The sentence was death by burning. This was not a refinement of torture invented by Mary, as one would think to read some of the history books. It was the recognized punishment for heresy, and rather less painful and long-drawn-out than some of the other punishments then on the Statute Books. As Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer had condemned at least two people to the same death. Latimer had preached at the execution of one of them.

Latimer and Ridley were the first to die. The stake was set up at a place just outside the walls of Oxford. The spot is marked now by the Martyrs' Memorial in St. Giles's, near Balliol College. The two men were chained on opposite sides of the same stake and the faggots piled up round them. A friend hung a bag of gunpowder round each of their necks. The heat would very soon explode the powder and kill them quickly and mercifully.

Latimer was a very old man. He died almost at once, but before he died he cried out:

"Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a



*The stake is prepared for Latimer and Ridley*

candle, by God's Grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out "

It was not until two months later that Cranmer was sentenced. All that time he had been in prison in Oxford. They led him into Christ Church Cathedral, and there disgraced him by tearing off his bishop's robes. His mitre was thrown aside and his crozier, the shepherd's crook of a bishop, torn out of his hands.

Another two months passed, and then, worn out by long imprisonment, or frightened of his approaching end, he agreed to recant his heresies.

"I, Thomas Cranmer," he wrote, "Doctor of Theology, submit myself to the Catholic Church of Christ and to the Pope as Supreme Head of that Church, and to their Majesties the King and Queen and to all their laws and orders."

But although this recantation was welcomed, the sentence of death still held. Then Cranmer saw that he had turned traitor to his faith in vain, and he was bitterly ashamed that he had ever tried to escape in such a way. He made the best amends he could. On the day of his execution, he was taken first to the University Church of St. Mary's, to make his recantation in public, and there he astonished his audience by taking back all he had said. He admitted that he had been wicked, not for being a Protestant, but for denying his Protestant religion in the moment of danger.

"I see before mine eyes presently either Heaven ready to receive me, or Hell ready to swallow me. I shall therefore to-day show you my very faith; for now it is no time to dissemble, whatever I have written in times past. . . . And forasmuch as I have written many things contrary to what I believe in my heart, my hand shall be first punished, for if I may come to the fire it shall be first burned."

Then they led him to the stake, and while the

ARCHBISHOP CRANMER

flames licked round him he held his right hand steadfastly in the fire, and never cried out or made any other sound until he died. So died Thomas Cranmer, on the 21st March, 1556.

“Nothing in his life  
Became him like the leaving of it.”

(MACBETH, I. iv. 8-9)



## Princess Elizabeth (1533-1558)

### I. THE YOUNG ELIZABETH

THE history books of Tudor days are full of unfortunate children who had to grow up unnaturally quickly and find their own way through the maze of politics and diplomacy. There was Lady Jane Grey, married, proclaimed Queen, tried for treason and beheaded before she was seventeen. There was Mary, separated from her mother at the age of fifteen, fighting for her position and her faith. There was the nine-year-old King Edward, surrounded by men who tried to use him as a pawn. And there was Elizabeth.

On the 7th September, 1533, a little red-haired daughter was born to King Henry VIII and Queen Anne Boleyn. Henry VIII had divorced Catherine of Aragon and married Anne so that he might have a son and heir to his kingdom. And then the longed-for baby was a girl.

"On Sunday last on the eve of Lady Day," the Spanish Ambassador wrote home, "about three o'clock in the afternoon, the King's mistress" (the Ambassador was naturally on Catherine's side and would not allow Anne the title of Queen) "was delivered of a girl, to the great disappointment and sorrow of the King, of the Lady herself, and of others of her party, and to the great shame and confusion of physicians, astrologers, witches and wizards, all of whom affirmed that it would be a boy. The people in general have rejoiced in the discomfiture of those who attack faith with such divinations. . . . It must be concluded that God has entirely abandoned the King, and left him a prey to his own misfortune and to his obstinate blindness."

Elizabeth was indeed christened with all the pomp and ceremony suitable to a Princess, but from the moment of her birth she was unwelcome, and her mother's fate sealed. The

baby was not two years old when her gay young mother was attainted of high treason and beheaded. She was not actually charged with the crime of having produced a daughter instead of a son, but everyone knew that that was the real reason for the King's anger against her. The day after her death Henry married Jane Seymour.

The little Elizabeth was now no longer a Princess, but only the daughter of a dead traitor. She had no place in the King's household. She had no mother and the King her father was not interested in her. She was put into the care of Lady Bryan and lived in any of the royal palaces which happened to be unoccupied at the moment. Poor Lady Bryan, who loved the self-willed little girl as though she were her own daughter, was nearly at her wits' end because there was no money to pay the servants and bring up "her grace" as a King's daughter should be brought up. She dared not write to the King direct, but she wrote to the King's minister about it.

.. "I know not how to order her, nor myself, nor none of hers that I have the rule of, that is, her women and grooms; beseeching you to be good lord to my lady and to all hers; and that she might have some raiment, for she hath

neither kirtle, nor gown, nor petticoat, and no manner of linen, nor fore-smocks, nor kerchief . . . all these her grace must have. I have driven off as long as I can, that, to my troth, I cannot drive it any longer: beseeching you, my lord, that you will see that her grace may have that is needful for her, as my trust is you will do

... "God knoweth my lady hath great pain with her great teeth, and they come very slowly forth; and causeth me to suffer her grace to have her will more than I would. I trust to God, if her teeth were well graft, to have her grace after another fashion than she is, so as I trust the King's grace shall have great comfort in her grace. For she is as toward a child and as gentle of conditions, as any in my life Jesu preserve her grace."

In spite of her rather muddled letters, Lady Bryan was not a muddled person. She looked after the child like a mother, through all the troubles of childhood as well as the more difficult and dangerous troubles of royalty. Elizabeth was such a quick-witted lively little girl that in spite of her unfortunate birth she became a great favourite with the King, in his pleasant moods.

She spent her childhood in various places. At one time she lived with her half-sister Mary.

The succession of stepmothers came and went. Jane Seymour died a week after her son's birth, Anne of Cleves was divorced, Catherine Howard was executed. Last of all came Catherine Parr, a kind gentle woman who really tried to be a mother to her step-children and make a home for them. She had them all to live with her, took an interest in their work and shielded them from the King's furies.

Elizabeth had her full share of the family brains. She became a first-rate Latin and Greek scholar, and spoke French and Italian as well. Nor was she allowed to forget more homely tasks. When she was six she made a cambric shirt for her two-year-old brother as a New Year gift, every stitch sewn by herself at the cost of many pricked fingers.

The atmosphere in which she grew up was not a very homely one. Her terrible old father was not to be crossed or thwarted. Once he refused to see her for a whole year after she had displeased him. One thing she learnt in those difficult years, to trust no one at all, and to keep her thoughts to herself.

And yet she had a great admiration and a sort of love as well for her huge lion of a father. When he was not in a rage he petted and spoiled her. And there was no doubt that he



*Princess Elizabeth gives her small brother a cambric shirt*

was a very impressive figure. He knew what he wanted and he got it. If ever she were Queen she would be just such a Queen as that. She and Prince Edward were together when the news of the King's death was brought to them. The two children clung together and wept so bitterly that their attendants wept in sympathy.

## 2. DANGEROUS YEARS

After her father's death, Elizabeth still lived with her stepmother, Queen Catherine, who married Thomas Seymour. But within a year

the Queen died, and Elizabeth, just fifteen, was really alone in the world.

At least she was a princess again instead of just "the Lady Elizabeth", for her father, in his will, had put both his daughters back into the succession to the throne. There was not a great chance of Elizabeth becoming Queen, of course, with Edward and Mary in front of her, both likely to marry and have children, but there was enough chance for everyone to be interested in her, and for Thomas Seymour to try to marry her before he married the Queen.

In spite of the household that surrounded her, Elizabeth was quite alone. Mostly she lived at Hatfield Palace, not far from London. There was no one she could trust. She had tutors, governesses and ladies-in-waiting all round her, but not one of them was as clever or as shrewd as she. In time of danger her tongue would have to guard her own head and no one could help her.

The times really were dangerous, too. Troubles came upon her thick and fast from the most unexpected sources. The young Princess steered through them all with a steady hand.

The first hazard was the case of Thomas Seymour in 1549, when she was sixteen. When he was arrested for high treason, an attempt was



*Princess Elizabeth with her tutor*

made to implicate her. Her servants were taken away by order of the Protector and spies put in their place. But no one could make her say an unwise word, and presently the matter was forgotten.

The second hazard was the case of Lady Jane Grey. Jane was proclaimed in London, but Mary was raising an army in the provinces. Which of them should Elizabeth support? She was too important a person to stay quiet until one or other of the queens was firmly established. And yet if she chose the losing side her reward would certainly be the block. Without hesitation she

did the only possible thing. She went to bed and announced that she was ill, too ill to join her sister, too ill to go up to London. She did nothing, said nothing, saw nobody, received and wrote no letters. She was so convincingly ill, probably out of pure fright, that no one could accuse her of pretence.

Through all the five long years of Mary's reign she was under suspicion. In fact she spent some months imprisoned in the Tower. Remembering her mother's fate, she never expected to come out of the grim fortress alive.

There was plot after plot made against Mary and her Spanish marriage, and each time the plotters tried to get Elizabeth on their side. It was only by the most constant watchfulness and a knowledge of every sort of subtlety that she escaped all the traps set for her. She can hardly have had a moment's peace, but she was not Old Harry's daughter for nothing. In those years of danger she learnt how to be a Queen. Later, when she was on the throne, and people thought that because she was a woman she would be easy to handle, they found that they had made a bad mistake. Elizabeth had learnt how to out-plot and out-scheme the plotters and schemers, and how to see behind men's faces and read their minds.

On November 16th, 1558, Queen Mary died, and the news was brought by a galloping messenger to Hatfield. Elizabeth could not pretend to be sorry. She fell on her knees crying: "It is the Lord's doing and it is wonderful in our eyes."

A history book that was written soon afterwards begins with these words:

"After all the stormy, tempestuous and blustering windy weather of Queen Mary was overblown, the darksome clouds of discomfort dispelled, the palpable fogs and mist of the most intolerable misery consumed, and the dashing showers of the persecution overpast; it pleased God to send England a calm and quiet season, a clear and lovely sunshine, a quietest (*relief*) from former broils of a turbulent estate, and a world of blessings by good Queen Elizabeth."

## BOOKS TO READ

THE lives in this book are very short. They are merely intended to start you off on a search for more information. Here is a list of books. These books will suggest others, and so on. Your local librarian will also be glad to help when you, yourself, can go no further.

Many of the books in this list are *reference* books. They are not meant to be read from cover to cover at one time. *Make up your mind what you are looking for before you start reading.*

*Illustrated English Social History*, Vol I (Chaucer's England and The Early Tudors). G. M. Trevelyan. (Longmans). A first-class book about the development of people's lives rather than political history. Fairly stiff going, but full of interesting information, and very well illustrated.

*A History of Everyday Things in England*, Vol II (1500-1799). Marjorie and C. H. B. Quennell. An invaluable collection of information about houses, food, clothes and all the material of everyday life. (Batsford).

*Boys and Girls of History* Eileen and Rhoda Power (Cambridge University Press) Book I has the stories of King Edward VI and Lady Jane Grey.

*Fanfare for Elizabeth*. Edith Sitwell. (Macmillan)

BOOKS TO READ

*The Tower of London.* Harrison Ainsworth. A novel about Lady Jane Grey and her times.

*Young Bess* } Margaret Irwin. (Chatto &  
*The Captive Princess* } Windus). Two novels about the childhood and youth of Princess Elizabeth before she came to the throne. Although told as a story, all the events in these books are historically true, and so are the people.

*His Majesty's Tower of London* Colonel H. Carkeet James. (Staples). A very good account of the Tower and its history, and its prisoners, including Lady Jane Grey and the Princess Elizabeth.

*Hakluyt's Voyages.* There have been many books written about explorers, but the first of them is still the best. *Hakluyt's Voyages*, which runs to ten large volumes, is impressive rather than inviting at first sight. But whoever is brave enough to dip into it will find many fascinating stories inside. Richard Chancellor's voyage to Muscovy occurs in the first volume.

*The Boy Through the Ages* } Dorothy Margaret  
*The Girl Through the Ages* } Stuart (Harrap)

*The Story of Your House* Agnes Allen. (Faber) A very interesting and well-illustrated history of houses and furniture.

*Edward VI.* Sir C. R. Markham (Murray). An old book, long out of print, but still the only life of Edward VI. The librarian can get it, although it is probably not on the shelves.

*Oxford Book of English Verse.* (Oxford University

THE TUDORS

Press). Contains one or two of the best of Surrey's poems and Sir Thomas Wyatt's as well.

It is possible to find a copy of Tottel's *Miscellany* in some libraries, but it makes very dull reading nowadays

## INTERESTING PLACES

**MUSEUMS.** Nearly every town has a museum, but never go there in a vague state of mind. Find out first what they have, and then decide what you want to see. Go to see it and then come away.

**PICTURE GALLERIES** Picture galleries are rarer than museums, but the same rules apply. One of the best and most useful is THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, Trafalgar Square, London. There are portraits in this gallery of almost every interesting person in British history (not all are on show, but the visitor can ask to see any of the stored ones). Post-card reproductions of many of the portraits can be bought for fourpence each.

**HATFIELD HOUSE** This is the house where Queen Elizabeth spent much of her youth. It is about twenty miles north of London and is open to the public.

**TOWER OF LONDON.** Both Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey were prisoners here at some time in their lives.

**LAMBETH PALACE** One of the few Tudor buildings in London. The home of the Archbishops of Canterbury. It was here that Cranmer wrote his Prayer Book. Visitors are not allowed inside the Palace, but the outside is well worth looking at.

**OXFORD** One can visit Christ Church Cathedral,

## THE TUDORS

where Cianmer's degradation took place, the University Place, where he withdrew his recantation on the morning of his death; and the Martyr's Memorial, which marks the scene of his death. The prison in which all three martyrs were imprisoned (called "The Bocardo") was over one of the town gates. There is not much left of it now, but one of the towers can be seen half way up Cornmarket Street.

